

# Ineos drives towards hydrogen car future

May 18 2024, by Ben PERRY

---



An Ineos hydrogen-fueled Grenadier car is driven on a test track during a 'Roadmap to Decarbonisation' event.

At a sprawling vehicle test center in the English countryside, a hydrogen-powered Grenadier 4x4 made by Ineos Automotive grips steep and rugged tracks, showcasing its off-road capabilities.

Making the demonstrator car was "a really obvious thing" to do, the company's chief executive Lynn Calder told journalists at the unveiling this week.

The young, fast-expanding company is part of petrochemicals giant and hydrogen producer Ineos, run by British billionaire and Manchester United stakeholder Jim Ratcliffe.

"When we embarked upon the demonstrator project, we saw the opportunity to showcase... that we have a completely uncompromised Grenadier in net zero form," she said at the event called "Road to Decarbonisation".

## **'Not this decade'**

Calder cautioned it would be some time before the car was available to buy amid a limited offering of other hydrogen-powered vehicles that are helping drive a path towards net zero carbon emissions.

Ineos cites the high cost of extracting the Earth's most abundant element and a lack of hydrogen refueling stations, especially in the UK, as obstacles to the development of cars deemed greener than popular electric vehicles (EVs).

Is the car "for tomorrow? No because there isn't infrastructure there", Calder said.

"We will keep it warm, we'll continue to talk about it, we will see it as part of the future but it doesn't feel like it's this decade," she added.

Calder spoke from the UTAC vehicle test center in Millbrook, a village north of London, where the hydrogen-powered vehicle quietly navigated dusty sharp bends and other obstacles.

Hydrogen cars work thanks to the cleanest form of the gas combining with oxygen in a [fuel cell](#) to generate electricity. The only waste emitted is water vapor.

Hydrogen-powered buses, cars, trucks and vans are all on the market, made by a small number of companies including Hyundai, Renault, Toyota and Vauxhall.

With governments pressuring the auto sector to go green, Ineos Automotive plans to launch an electric 4x4 in 2027, the Fusilier, to be sold alongside current diesel and petrol versions of the Grenadier.

Speaking against the din of sports cars speeding in the distance, Calder hit out at the UK government's goal of banning the sale of new petrol and diesel cars from 2035.



Chief executive officer Lynn Calder says it will be some time before the car will be available to buy, not least owing to a lack of infrastructure.

### **'Pipe dream plan'**

"I don't think it works, I don't think it's achievable, I think we will fail," she predicted, even after Prime Minister Rishi Sunak pushed back the original 2030 date.

The Scottish CEO called it a "pipe dream plan with no strategy around it, no idea how we're going to get there".

Responding, the Department for Transport said a number of incentives were on offer to enable the transition away from polluting vehicles.

It added that demand for EVs was "high", even if recent data shows evidence of slowing sales in the UK and abroad.

Regarding infrastructure, "there are over 61,000 public chargepoints across the UK -- an increase of 44 percent since this time last year", a department spokesperson told AFP.

According to consultants LBST, only 921 hydrogen refueling stations were in operation worldwide at the end of last year.

China was out in front with around 200 stations, or about double the amount in European leader Germany.

The UK currently has just six, even if hydrogen vehicles can offer a

longer journey range and are faster at refueling than electric rivals.

## **Election impact**

The country's road to net zero is clouded somewhat by the outcome of this year's general election.

Polls widely suggest that Sunak's Conservatives will lose power to the main opposition Labour Party.

Labour's plans for emissions targets have been called into question after leader Keir Starmer ditched its flagship commitment to spend £28 billion (\$35.5 billion) a year on [green infrastructure](#) if in power.

Greenpeace UK's senior transport campaigner, Paul Morozzo, called on the next government to reinstate the 2030 ban and increase tax on polluting vehicles.

He added that it must "get on with delivering a proper network of EV charging points all across the country and get the transition to EVs back on the road".

As for hydrogen, with so little infrastructure, the fuel "isn't viable or desirable for mass transit" at the current time, he told AFP.

© 2024 AFP

Citation: Ineos drives towards hydrogen car future (2024, May 18) retrieved 16 August 2024 from <https://techxplore.com/news/2024-05-ineos-hydrogen-car-future.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.